(c) Does not arise, in view of part (b) above. During February, 2004, Government has taken a decision to convert 7457 Km. of State Roads in different States as National Highways including Jagadalpur-Konta Road (172 Km) and Bilaspur-Ambikapur road (223 Km) in Chhattisgarh. The total length of National Highways network in the country at present is about 65,569 Km. and huge investment will have to be made to upgrade these roads to National Highways standards. At present, thee is a need to concentrate on the development of the existing National Highways instead of further expansion of the network. Considering the extent of investment required for upgrading the National Highways already declared and their maintenance, it is neither feasible to declare more roads as National Highways at present, nor to set apart any special amount for Chhattisgarh for the same.

Assistance for roads to Assam

†1830. SHRI DWIJENDRA NATH SHARMAH: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assistance have been provided by Central Government to the State of Assam for construction, repair and widening of the roads during the year 2003-04 and 2004-05;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of proposals submitted by the State of Assam during these periods?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. This Ministry is primarily responsible for the development and maintenance of National Highways. An amount of Rs. 235.95 crore and Rs. 185.33 crore has been allocated for the development and maintenance of National Highways (including widening, maintenance and repair) to the State of Assam during 2003-04 and 2004-05 so far, respectively.

In addition, this Ministry is also providing assistance for State roads under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of Central Road Fund and Economic Importance/Inter-State Connectivity. An amount of Rs. 14.44 crore and Rs. 20.07 crore has been allocated during 2003-04 and 2004-05 so far, respectively under the above schemes.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) Sixty seven proposals costing Rs. 231.50 crore and seventy two proposals costing Rs. 216.17 crore have been submitted by the State of Assam during 2003-04 and 2004-05 so far, respectively for the development and maintenance of National Highways.

Ten proposals amounting to Rs. 14.60 crore and twenty proposals amounting to Rs. 57.30 crore have been sanctioned during 2003-04 and 2004-05 so far, respectively for the State roads as per Ministry's guidelines, within the availability of funds.

Roads in North-Eastern States

1831. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number and the names of the National Highways undertaken/ to be undertaken by Government during the years 2003-04 and 2004-05 for broadening and renovating;

(b) the number out of them belong to the North-Eastern States;

(c) whether Government have a plan to double-lane NH-44 from Assam to the sabroom of Tripura; and

(d) if so, the progress made so far and the fund spent out of the fund allocated?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA): (a) Various improvement works including widening and strengthening of National Highways were undertaken/are to be taken up on 142 and 138 National Highways during the year 2003-04 and 2004-05 respectively. The details are given in the Statement (*See* below).

(b) Out of the above 27 National Highways are in North-Eastern States.

(c) and (d) The total length of NH-44 in Assam and Tripura is 448 km out of which 119 km are double lane. the entire NH-44 in Assam and Tripura has been planned for double laning. The works are under different stages of progress. During last four years Rs. 125.64 crore has been spent and there is a provision of Rs. 35.98 crore during current financial year for improvement works of NH-44 in Assam & Tripura.